

Creative Social Network Engagement to Boost Your Practice

Creative social media promotion can achieve the greatest impact and widespread publicity for the dermatologist—at the lowest cost.

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A recent advertising study called “Digital Index” from Adobe Systems says that Facebook brand engagement has witnessed a year-on-year jump of nearly 900 percent. Adobe’s research study attributes this huge surge in engagement levels, in part, to the new Timeline feature of Facebook.

Several other studies on the same issue tend to corroborate the findings of the Adobe study. A study conducted a few months ago found that the Timeline feature of Facebook achieved positive results, particularly for small and medium-sized brand pages. A major upswing in mobile engagement among Facebook users has also contributed to this extraordinary gain in Facebook brand engagement levels. Nearly 25 percent of the total engagement for Facebook came from mobile users. The overall gains in mobile marketing have also been significant for Facebook during the same period.

Professional practitioners such as dermatologists should look at these new social media and mobile marketing trends and find ways to integrate them with their own online marketing strategies. They can engage the services of professional Internet marketing companies to develop a focused social media campaign in line with the new trends.

A COSTLY MISTAKE

Dermatologists, who are keenly looking at new ways to promote their practices in a highly competitive market environment, must take notice of the favorable social network marketing trends. Search engine optimization (SEO) and social networking are increasingly intertwined with each other today. Leading search engines such as Google tend to accord higher page rankings to websites that have

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an active interaction with prominent social networks such as Facebook.

However, many SEO and Internet marketing companies continue to make the fatal error of ignoring social network promotion, while pressing on with the traditional SEO strategies as before. Dermatologists with active Internet marketing engagement to promote their practices should seriously consider working with marketers that understand the growing importance of social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and Google Plus.

MOBILE SEARCH MARKETING

Adobe’s Digital Index report reveals encouraging progress for mobile search marketing. It says that 20 percent of paid search clicks came from a smartphone or a tablet—a trend that is expected to gain strength rapidly. Therefore, a dermatology practice must have customized websites with excellent compatibility with smartphones and tablets.

Innovative Internet marketing companies are already finding new ways to take advantage of the new trends by focusing their marketing energies on tablets and smartphones. At the same time, they are capitalizing on the new platform changes introduced by Facebook to reach out to their target audience in a more personalized manner.

The current trends as revealed in the Adobe report should encourage dermatologists to tailor their online marketing campaigns to include mobile marketing and social media promotions. However, the emphasis on mobile and social media must not come at the cost of traditional Internet search marketing. The “search spend” of an average US company grew by 11 percent compared to last year.

BUILDING YOUR BRAND

To survive in a competitive environment, it is crucial for a dermatology practice to be able to differentiate itself from its competitors and build a unique brand identity of its own, which potential patients can identify with. A lot depends on the professional marketing team that develops the marketing campaign for the dermatologist. Clearly, an average dermatology practice is going to have a very limited marketing budget. Therefore, the maximum value within this budget may be achieved through Internet marketing and SEO alone.

Creative social media promotion can achieve the greatest impact and widespread publicity for the dermatologist—at the lowest cost. However, the social media area is also highly crowded, and it is not easy to develop a large, targeted, and responsive audience on social networks. An experienced social media marketing company will first understand the inherent social needs of the target audience of a dermatology practice brand. It will analyze what the potential patients instinctively wish to engage with and share with others on the social networks.

This information and analysis will help the marketers come up with innovative ideas to capture the imagination of this audience over the social networks. It will create exclusive content for the audience, which will engage and prompt them to share it with others. Social networks such as Facebook provide Page Insight data, which can help marketers understand what kind of content is most appealing for the dermatologist’s target audience.

EFFECTIVE SOCIAL NETWORKING TIPS

A dermatologist planning to launch a focused social media campaign to promote an independent practice should keep some very basic tips in mind.

- “Brevity is the soul of wit” when it comes to social networking. Brief postings with less than three lines of text tend to achieve a far better reader engagement and response compared to lengthier postings. Therefore, be brief in your social media updates.
- Post frequently and maintain consistency. Readers have a very short memory span in the world of social media. Out of sight is out of mind in this game. Stay in touch with your readers, and post fresh messages about three to five times a week, if not more.

- Use Page Insights to determine what may be the optimal time to post on your social network. Maximize your impact and reach by posting in the optimal time range.
- Familiarize yourself with your audience as much as possible. Whenever there is an opportunity, engage with them individually and personalize the relationships.
- Try to be very current and seasonable in your social media engagements. Your fans and followers will feel more connected with you when you touch upon the most pressing and hot issues of the day.
- Be reader-friendly in language and content. Make your messages appropriate for the profile of your target audience.
- Make use of images and videos wherever possible. A growing number of online readers and social media enthusiasts prefer to view rather than read a lot of text. Reader engagement levels improve dramatically with pictures and videos.
- Try to construct brand-specific content in your social media engagements. Help your readers identify with your dermatology practice brand by speaking in your particular brand voice. Differentiate yourself from other dermatologists on social networks and offer something unique to your readers in your content.

The most important aspect of your Internet search and social media marketing campaign for your dermatology practice must be to constantly strive to be useful to your readers through this medium. Rather than focusing on aggressive self-promotion, make a point to disseminate useful dermatology-related information, and educate and guide potential patients about new products, procedures, and treatments that may suit their needs. A sincere, helpful, and pro-patient approach will go a long way in building your dermatology practice brand online. ■

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